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Device for Converting UMTS Signals

The present invention relates to a device for converting UMTS signals.

One of the problems of today's UMTS networks is the poor coverage with UMTS services in buildings (so-called deep indoor coverage). One of the possibilities for eliminating this problem would be to improve network coverage by a larger density of transmitting stations. However, the erection of additional transmission masts to improve UMTS network coverage involves considerable costs and therefore is disadvantageous. Another possibility would be the distribution of UMTS repeaters. These active network elements must, however, always remain under the absolute control of the network operator, as they would otherwise disturb network planning. Providing such devices to private users, and the flexible and mobile use thereof, therefore is not possible.

Accordingly, it is the object of the present invention to provide means for optimally utilizing UMTS services also in buildings in an inexpensive and flexible way.

This object is solved by a device with the features as stated in claim 1. The device in accordance with the invention effects the reception of UMTS-FDD services and the conversion of the two standard technologies UMTS-FDD and WLAN.

One conceivable application relates to private users of UMTS services, which by means of the device of the invention obtain a fast Internet access, even if not enough "indoor" UMTS coverage is available. In a preferred aspect of the invention, the device receives UMTS services on a suitable point, for instance on a window, and then provides WLAN coverage of the interior. Then, the user can for instance surf on the UMTS network by means of a WLAN notebook.

In accordance with a further aspect of the invention it is provided that communication is effected bidirectionally, i.e. WLAN signals are received by the

device, are converted into UMTS-FDD signals, and the latter then are transmitted to the UMTS radio network.

Particularly advantageously, there are furthermore provided means for converting the UMTS-FDD signals received into signals according to a telephone standard, as well as means for providing or transmitting the signals according to a telephone standard. In this case as well, means are provided in accordance with a preferred aspect of the invention, which provide for a bidirectional communication, i.e. which convert the received signals according to a telephone standard into UMTS-FDD signals and then transmit the same.

The term "signals according to a telephone standard" includes any signals provided on a telephone connection. The telephone connection can for instance be a classical PSTN- or ISDN connection as it is used in Europe.

Accordingly, the device in accordance with the invention can be utilized for processing voice messages in the widest sense. It is conceivable that the device includes a receiver unit, by means of which voice messages based on the UMTS standard are received. Said voice messages are converted into signals of a telephone standard and are then provided on the device or transmitted by the same. Such aspect of the invention allows the complete replacement of a wireline telephone connection by the device of the invention. The term "voice messages" should cover a wide range and comprises for instance voice, telefax and the like.

The present invention furthermore relates to a device for converting UMTS signals into signals according to a telephone standard, comprising a receiver unit for receiving the signals according to the UMTS standard, means for converting the signals received into signals according to a telephone standard as well as means for providing or transmitting the signals according to a telephone standard. As described above, a wireline telephone connection can be replaced by the UMTS technology by means of such a device. Preferably, there are provided means which provide for a bidirectional communication, i.e. receive the signals according to a telephone standard, convert the same into UMTS signals and transmit the same into the network.

Such a device can be implemented with or without means for converting the UMTS services into WLAN data. Particularly advantageously, however, means are provided for converting the UMTS signals received into signals according to the WLAN standard as well as means for providing or transmitting the signals according to the WLAN standard. In such aspect of the invention the device not only provides for converting UMTS services into telephone connection data, but also into WLAN signals, and preferably also for receiving the WLAN signals, converting the same into UMTS signals and transmitting the UMTS signals into the UMTS network.

The means for providing the WLAN standard can comprise a slot as well as a plug-in WLAN card for outputting signals according to the WLAN standard.

In a further aspect of the invention it is provided that the means for providing the signals according to a telephone standard comprise a connection unit for a telephone system and/or a fax machine. The term telephone system should cover a wide range and can include one or more individual telephones or a telephone network with a plurality of interconnected telephones.

To provide for Internet usage by means of the device in accordance with the invention, it can be provided that the signals according to the UMTS-FDD standard or according to the UMTS standard comprise signals which provide for utilizing the Internet. In this way, Internet usage by means of the UMTS technology can be effected from a place at which there is not enough UMTS coverage.

It can furthermore be provided that the UMTS-FDD data or the UMTS data comprise voice data. These can for instance be voice messages or also fax messages. In this embodiment of the invention, the device is used for receiving or transmitting fax messages and for making telephone calls.

The present invention furthermore relates to a communication system comprising a device as claimed in any of claims 1 to 9 and comprising at least one computer connected with the device and/or at least one telephone system or fax machine connected with the device.

What is conceivable is a communication system, in which it is made possible for users to surf in the Internet at home by means of WLAN and UMTS. In addition or as an alternative, the device can be used as a gateway for making telephone calls or for receiving or transmitting fax messages. The device provides considerable advantages as compared to the extension of a network. Another advantage results from the fact that known devices can be used, such as a WLAN laptop or a usual wireline telephone.

In a further aspect of the invention, the computers are connectable with the Internet as well as with each other. In one embodiment of the invention, working groups can be formed in this way. The members of the working group can communicate with each other via the access point formed by the device of the invention and together can build up an internal network. If necessary, a connection to the outside can be effected via UMTS.

The same is true for mobile hot spots for wireless areas such as construction sites, warehouses and the like. In such places, users can log in via WLAN without each user requiring a separate UMTS card and without each user requiring an excellent UMTS coverage.

If the communication system serves to transmit telephone and/or fax messages, it can be provided that the telephone system or the fax machine communicates with the device via a cord-connected line. It is thus conceivable that, as is common practice today with firmly installed wireline connections, the telephone system or the fax machine is connected with the device by means of a plug-in connection.

It is furthermore conceivable that the device communicates with a transceiver unit for telephone/fax data and that the transceiver unit has a cordless connection with the telephone system or the fax machine.

In a further aspect of the invention, the possibilities for connection of a telephone system or a fax machine are not different from those of commonly used firmly installed wireline sockets. The device of the invention provides a mobile wireline connection, which has considerable advantages as regards the administration effort (no log on, log off or change of registration) and as regards the mobility.

In the aforementioned embodiments, a bidirectional communication is possible in accordance with a preferred aspect of the invention.

Further details will be explained in detail with reference to an embodiment illustrated in the drawing, in which:

Fig. 1 is a schematic representation of the device in accordance with the invention for receiving and converting UMTS Internet data and UMTS voice/fax signals;

Fig. 2 is a schematic representation of a communication system in accordance with the invention comprising a plurality of computers interconnected via WLAN; and

Fig. 3 is a schematic representation of a business hot spot in the form of the device in accordance with the invention.

Fig. 1 shows an embodiment of the inventive device referred to as gateway, comprising a receiver unit for the wireless reception of UMTS-FDD data for utilizing the internet as well as for the reception of UMTS-FDD voice messages and fax data. The device furthermore includes means for converting the data received into signals according to the WLAN standard as well as the PSTN and/or ISDN standards. Furthermore, there are provided means for providing or transmitting the signals according to the WLAN as well as the PSTN and/or ISDN standards. On the one hand, this is a WLAN transceiver unit for receiving and transmitting the data from laptops suitable for WLAN. On the other hand, there is provided a socket for connection of a telephone or telephone system and of a fax machine.

As can be taken from Fig. 1, the device preferably is arranged in the vicinity of a good UMTS coverage, for instance on a window.

The illustrated device provides for a bidirectional communication, i.e. not only the reception of UMTS-FDD services, their conversion into WLAN signals or into PSTN and/or ISDN signals as well as the provision/transmission of these signals, but also the reception of WLAN, PSTN and/or ISDN signals, their conversion into

UMTS-FDD signals as well as the transmission of the UMTS-FDD signals into the UMTS radio network.

The device of the invention in the embodiment as shown in Fig. 1 provides for the replacement of a firmly installed wireline socket and in addition provides for building up a WLAN network by using the UMTS technology even without UMTS coverage in the room itself.

The device is useful for private users and also for business purposes.

Fig. 2 shows a schematic representation of a communication system in accordance with the invention with a plurality of computers interconnected via WLAN. The members of the illustrated working group can communicate with each other via WLAN by means of the device in accordance with the invention. If necessary, the device can be used for connection to the Internet via UMTS-FDD. Accordingly, from each computer of the working group contact can either be made to another computer of the working group via the device or a log-in to the Internet can be effected. In this case, the device of the invention serves as a mobile access point, which in a preferred aspect provides for a bidirectional communication.

Fig. 3 shows another application of the device in accordance with the invention as a mobile hot spot. If the device is installed in a wireless area, for instance in a factory hall, it is possible to log in there via WLAN by means of the device and via UMTS-FDD. It is not necessary that each computer has a UMTS card. It is not necessary either that each location of the computer has a sufficient UMTS coverage, as the computers do not communicate with the device via UMTS, but via WLAN, said device establishing a preferably unidirectional connection to the outside via UMTS-FDD.